



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Evaluation of Step Ahead (SA) program

1. Introduction

Blue Dragon Children's Foundation (hereafter referred to as Blue Dragon) started in 2003 with the goal of providing exceptional care for children in crisis and their families throughout Vietnam, and at the same time create lasting change for a better world. We rescue children from danger and nurture their growth. We apply knowledge, expertise and experience working with individuals, family and community to effect change in institutions, laws, and systems. Our vision is to end human trafficking in the next 10 years.

There are many reasons for children to end up as "street children". Most of them leave home for big cities to escape extreme hardship but instead, they become targets for abuse, human trafficking and exploitation. The Law on Child Protection, Care and Education by the Vietnamese National Assembly dated 15/06/2004 considered wandering children/street children a vulnerable group and defined them as those who left home, earned a living by themselves, did not have a stable accommodation, or those wandering with their families. At that time, the number of wandering children was estimated at 20,000. In 2016 this Law was updated and children with special difficulties were classified into 14 groups, of whom street children were not a term any more, but instead are understood to fall into the category of "children dropping out of school and earning a living". To date there are no official statistics of the number of street children.

Blue Dragon defines street children as:

- i) have left home and live and/or work on the streets, or
- ii) live with their families and work on the streets to earn money

Located in Hanoi, Step Ahead (SA) is Blue Dragon's largest program. Step Ahead works with street kids, children with disabilities and children from very poor families and equips them with the education, health, life skills and confidence they need to move forward independently with their lives. Step Ahead provides individualized 'wrap around' support to children and their families depending on their needs, and centred on ensuring children have the health, education and skills to succeed in the future.

In 2018 an external evaluation of the SA program was conducted which provided an in-depth review of the relevance of program design compared to the government's policies and the needs of beneficiaries; the effectiveness of the performance in meeting the core needs of children and offering them chances to be independent; and measured the impact of interventions. Since then there have been several changes to the program in order to adapt to the changing situation and needs of targeted children as well as to be in line with the strategic plan of the organisation. Among the changes was a restructure of the SA program, whereby SA currently includes an outreach team, case management team, disability team and safe accommodation for both emergency and long term accommodation. Other supporting sections: Learning and Development, Careers and Psychology

have been taken out of Step Ahead and are separate departments providing services to children throughout Blue Dragon, not only Step Ahead.

2. Program information

The overall objective of the Step Ahead program is to ensure street children and/or those with special difficulties can access exceptional care to be safe and fully develop, contributing to end human trafficking.

Step Ahead program has 3 main areas:

- Crisis care: outreach workers meet children on the streets and provide emergency services to ensure they are safe and protected, including safe accommodation, food, counselling, reunion with family.
- Case management: provide comprehensive, long term support to help children to develop to their full potential, rebuild their lives and become leaders of their life.
- Disability: provide comprehensive case management assistance to children and youth with disabilities.

Overall, the program objectives for the period Jul 2022 - Jun 2023 are grouped in 4 areas:

1. Access and support children with exceptional care and holistic interventions, contributing to ending human trafficking and other child exploitation.
2. Improve economic independence and provide psychological support for parents/caregivers in order to better support their children.
3. Strengthen partnerships and network of service providers inside and outside Blue Dragon to facilitate the program implementation.
4. Ensure staff have the skills to do their jobs effectively and receive support to manage stress, workload and vicarious trauma.

3. Evaluation objectives and scope

The main objective of this evaluation is to independently review the status, relevance and performance of the program for the period 2019 - 2022 compared to the plan, to assess the results and impacts, and consider the sustainability. The evaluation should also assess issues of coordination, partnership, and beneficiary participation. It will assess whether the program results are on track and capacities built among children and program partners. The evaluation should consider cross cutting issues of gender, child protection and environmental protection.

More specifically, the objectives of the evaluation will be to assess:

- Progress made on recommendations from the program evaluation in 2018.
- Effectiveness of the program in relation to achieving the program objectives.
- Collaboration of partners in program planning and implementation.
- Beneficiary participation in services received and the design of program activities.
- The need for qualitative indicators or other assessment tools for impact measurement.
- Sustainability of the program.

The evaluation will look at the following criteria. The table below identifies the overarching questions anticipated to be addressed by the program's evaluation framework. However, the consultant(s) will

be expected to work with the Program leaders to review and revise the program evaluation questions as appropriate.

Evaluation criteria	Program evaluation questions
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the program’s objectives, approach, outputs display continued relevance to the development policies and priorities of the government and the community regarding the protection, care and education for children in difficulties? • What level of support has the program received from local authorities and the community? How could the program improve to better adapt and respond to the local situation and the needs of the target beneficiaries? • How successful was the program in terms of providing access to street children, children with disability, children of ethnic minorities, victims of child sexual abuse, exploitation or human trafficking? • How do the participating children and stakeholders assess the relevance of the program? • How appropriate and useful are the indicators described in the program document for monitoring and measuring results? • If necessary, how should the indicators be modified to be more useful? Are the means of verification for the indicators appropriate?
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the program successfully designed, implemented and if necessary adjusted during the evaluation period? • How effective was the support from other departments and programs (Learning & Development, Psychology, Legal, Careers, Human Trafficking Prevention) towards Step Ahead program? • How have stakeholders been involved in program design and implementation? Assess the level of ownership of the program among the stakeholders and beneficiaries? • What is the level and quality of participation of beneficiaries in the program implementation process?
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective is emergency support provided to outreach children? • How effective are the long term interventions including case management for children with/without an Individual Assistance Plan? • How effective was the referral system of disabled children to Blue Dragon and from Blue Dragon to other partners? • Is the program on track to achieve expected results on time? • What are the strengths, barriers and challenges in achieving the program goals and any relevant recommendations. • Are there program activities that are no longer relevant or appropriate?
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do support services create dependence or independence for children and their families? • How is the partnership and collaboration amongst relevant agencies (government and non-government) to ensure the protection of children on the street in Hanoi? • Are any further activities/inputs needed to ensure sustainability of the program?
Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the coherence of the program components, practice and structure in comparison with other similar or relevant models or interventions.

4. Evaluation methods, process and timeframe

Methodology

The evaluation will be a transparent and participatory process involving relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries (children, youth, and parents). This evaluation takes place after four years since the previous assessment. The evaluation will look at the progress made towards the results and suggest any changes to management or structure to improve the program. The entire process of the evaluation will take place over a period of about 7 weeks (from Sept to Nov 2022) in Ha Noi.

Process

The evaluation will include the following steps:

Step 1: Inception meeting, desk review of key documents, discussions with Blue Dragon to understand the scope of the evaluation. *(1.5 days)*

The evaluator will attend an inception meeting where s/he will be oriented on program objectives and key progress. The evaluator will have the chance to meet with Blue Dragon staff to be oriented with the program and define scope as well as design of the evaluation.

Step 2: Submission of the evaluation design *(1.5 days)*

Evaluator will submit final evaluation questions, identify stakeholders for interviews and discussions, and present the methodology of the evaluation. This will be finalized in agreement with Blue Dragon.

Step 3: Data collection and analysis *(6 days)*

Interviews and focus group discussions, or questionnaire interview should focus on what stakeholders know and perceive to be true about the program. Data from the program staff, documentation, and stakeholder interviews and group discussions should be used to determine plausibility of the program model.

The consultant will analyse all the relevant data to determine the extent to which the program is properly implemented, sufficiently developed, and activities appropriate, to reasonably predict that desired outcomes will be met. Data collected should be disaggregated (by sex, age, disability, ethnicity and location), where possible. Data will also be collected from stakeholder key informants through interviews, discussions, consultative processes, and observations.

Collected data should be analyzed. Analysis framework should be clearly explained in the report.

Step 4: Share preliminary findings and presentation draft report *(2 days)*

The evaluator will share preliminary findings and recommendations with Blue Dragon. The evaluator will draft the report and present the initial report to Blue Dragon. Draft report will be made in English. Feedback will be taken into consideration and incorporated into the final report.

Step 5: Final report *(2 days)*

Based on comments from Blue Dragon about the draft the evaluator finalizes the report. Blue Dragon will review the report as part of quality assurance and will share it with the reference group for their feedback. The final report will be made with all inputs from related stakeholders and Blue Dragon will follow up the action points. The final version will be made in both English and Vietnamese.

Total: 13 technical days

Timeframe (estimated)

Activities		Oct 2022	Nov 2022	Dec 2022
1.	TOR drafted and finalized			
2.	Selection of consultants and hiring process	X		
3.	Inception meeting, desk review and development of evaluation methodology (week 3)	X		
4.	Inception review by Blue Dragon (week 4)	X		
5.	Data collection (week 1)		X	
6.	Preliminary findings to Blue Dragon (week 2)		X	
7.	1 st Drafting of the Report (week 3)		X	
8.	Review 1st draft report by Blue Dragon (week 3)		X	
9.	2nd draft report and review by Blue Dragon (week 4)		X	
10.	Finalization and Submission of final report (week 1)			X
11.	Report dissemination and follow up action to address the recommendations			

5. Deliverables

Evaluators are expected to submit the following documents:

- 1. Evaluation design** detailing the sampling framework, data collection plan, methodologies, how each evaluation question will be evaluated, schedule of tasks, proposed format of the report, etc.
- 2. Draft Evaluation report** - The consultant will prepare a draft evaluation report with the agreed format. The report will be submitted to Blue Dragon who will provide feedback within 1 week after receiving the Draft Report. The report will be reviewed to ensure that the evaluation meets the required quality criteria.
- 3. Evaluation report** assessing the program's progress, process and effectiveness by this stage. The main body of the final report should be no more than 30 pages excluding additional annexes. It will describe the lessons learned, through measurements of the changes in the set indicators, summarize the experiences gained, technically and managerially, and recommend the approaches and methodologies for their further dissemination, and also to provide suggestions for the program implementation for the next 4-5 years. The report should be submitted in English (and a translation into Vietnamese) in electronic form.

6. Budget

A gross budget for each technical day is 2,500,000VND, therefore the total amount for the evaluation is 32,500,000VND for 13 technical days, of which, Blue Dragon will withhold 10% to pay PIT.

7. Required skills and competencies

Following are the required skills and competencies expected from the selected applicant for conducting this evaluation. In the case of an evaluation team, it is expected that the team leader should fulfill all required skills and competencies.

- Education:
 - ✓ Advanced degree in relevant discipline (e.g. social science, psychology, gender, development, social studies, sociology, political science, etc.)
- Professional experience:
 - ✓ At least 6 years experience in program evaluation in a development context, especially related to child rights, child development, and proven accomplishment in undertaking evaluations, including leading evaluations of NGO programs; experience with street children is an advantage.
- Knowledge and skills:
 - ✓ Knowledge of evaluation;
 - ✓ Knowledge in results-based programming;
 - ✓ Extensive knowledge of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods;
 - ✓ Excellent written and spoken English and Vietnamese;
- Applicants need to submit:
 - ✓ Letter of interest explaining why they are the most suitable for the work
 - ✓ Two writing samples/reports in English
 - ✓ Curriculum vitae

Only applications with all items mentioned above will be considered.

Applicants should send the application package with subject "Consultancy_SA evaluation" to jobs@bdcf.org no later than 9 Oct 2022.